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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Report of the Second Committee (Part VII)*

Rapporteur: Ms. Silvia Cristina CORADO-CUEVAS (Guatemala)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 97 (see A/51/605, para. 2). Action on sub-item (f) was taken at the 19th and 37th meetings, on 29 October and 2 December 1996. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/51/SR.19 and 37).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.2/51/L.4 AND L.42

2. At the 19th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Costa Rica (on behalf of the States Members that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Colombia (on behalf of the States Members that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries) introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.4) entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction", which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 48/188 of 21 December 1993, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994 and 50/117 A and 50/117 B, both of 20 December 1995, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/45 of 26 July 1996,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/51/605 and addenda.

"Expressing its solidarity with the people and countries that suffer as a result of natural disasters and expressing also the deepest sympathy to all victims of the natural disasters that have struck in various parts of the globe,

"Emphasizing once again the urgent need for concrete measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards, the loss of human lives and the heavy physical and economic damage that occur as a result of natural disasters, in particular in developing countries, small island States and landlocked countries,

"Commending those countries, national and local institutions, organizations and associations that have adopted policies, allocated resources and initiated action programmes, including international assistance, for disaster reduction and, in this context, welcoming the participation of private companies and individuals,

"1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction;

"2. Reaffirms that disaster reduction is an integral part of and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, through the protection, at the national and community levels, of such resources as human lives, human capacities, financial assets, natural assets, natural resources and the environment, means of production and infrastructure;

"3. Calls upon Member States, relevant intergovernmental bodies and all others involved in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to extend financial and technical support for Decade activities, in order to ensure the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, in particular with a view to translating the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and the Plan of Action contained therein into concrete disaster reduction programmes and activities;

"4. Commends all countries that have mobilized domestic resources for disaster reduction activities and facilitated the effective implementation of such activities, and encourages all countries concerned to continue in this direction;

"5. Reaffirms the need to support the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action with particular regard to improving education and training in disaster reduction, including the creation of interdisciplinary and technical networking at all levels, for the purpose of capacity-building and human resources development in developing countries, in particular those that are prone to natural disasters, as well as least developed, small island and landlocked countries;

"6. Stresses the need for synergy between the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and that of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action as they relate to natural disaster reduction;

"7. Underlines the need for the United Nations system to ensure the integration of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action into the coordinated approach taken to the follow-up to all recent major United Nations conferences and summit meetings and to the implementation of their respective plans of action;

"8. Invites the Secretary-General, in particular, to facilitate, within the existing International Framework of Action for the Decade, an internationally concerted framework for improvements in early warning capacities by developing a concrete proposal for an effective international mechanism on early warning, to include the transfer of technologies related to early warning to developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations and as part of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade and the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action;

"9. Calls on the Secretary-General to ensure adequate consideration and involvement of the International Framework of Action for the Decade in the evaluation and overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 in 1997;

"10. Reaffirms that the secretariat of the Decade will continue to serve as the substantive secretariat for the preparation of the closing event of the Decade, working with the full support of relevant bodies of the United Nations Secretariat and drawing on the contributions of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned, other international organizations and Governments;

"11. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the availability of resources for the activities related to the preparation of the closing event of the Decade and to appeal for additional voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade;

"12. Also requests the Secretary-General to review relationships and responsibilities for natural disaster reduction with respect to the future, and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, including concrete proposals for ensuring the distinct performance capability of the secretariat of the Decade, in order to bring the Decade to its successful conclusion by the year 1999;

"13. Requests the secretariat of the Decade to convene, in its capacity as substantive secretariat of the closing event of the Decade, the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the closing event, not later than the special session of the General Assembly to review Agenda 21, and with due recognition of equitable regional representation."

3. On 22 November, a statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.4 was circulated by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.2/51/L.36).

4. At the 37th meeting, on 2 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Mohammad Reza Hadji Karim Djabbary (Islamic Republic of Iran), introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/51/L.42), submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.4.

5. The Secretary of the Committee informed the Committee that the programme budget implications contained in document A/C.2/51/L.36 did not apply to draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.42 (see A/C.2/51/SR.37).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.42 (see para. 8).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.42, draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.4 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 48/188 of 21 December 1993, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, and 50/117 A and 50/117 B, both of 20 December 1995, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/45 of 26 July 1996,

Expressing its solidarity with the people and countries that suffer as a result of natural disasters and expressing also the deepest sympathy to all victims of the natural disasters that have struck in various parts of the globe,

Emphasizing once again the urgent need for concrete measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards, the loss of human lives and the heavy physical and economic damage that occur as a result of natural disasters, in particular in developing countries, small island developing States and landlocked countries,

Commending those countries, national and local institutions, organizations and associations that have adopted policies, allocated resources and initiated action programmes, including international assistance, for disaster reduction and, in this context, welcoming the participation of private companies and individuals,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction;[1]

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[1] A/51/186-E/1996/80.

2. Reaffirms that disaster reduction forms an integral part of sustainable development strategies and national development plans of vulnerable countries and communities;

3. Calls upon all States, relevant intergovernmental bodies and all others involved in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to participate actively in the financial and technical support for Decade activities, in order to ensure the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade,[2] in particular with a view to translating the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and the Plan of Action contained therein[3] into concrete disaster reduction programmes and activities;

4. Commends all countries, in particular those developing and least developed countries that have mobilized domestic resources for disaster reduction activities and have facilitated the effective implementation of such activities, and encourages all developing countries concerned to continue in this direction;

5. Reaffirms the need to support the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with particular regard to improving education and training in disaster reduction, including the creation of interdisciplinary and technical networking at all levels, for the purpose of capacity-building and human resources development in developing countries, in particular those that are prone to natural disasters, as well as least developed, small island developing and landlocked countries;

6. Welcomes the initiatives aimed at defining regional frameworks for disaster mitigation, such as the regional seminars held in Africa and the Mediterranean;

7. Stresses the need for synergy between the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[4] and that of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action as they relate to natural disaster reduction;

8. Underlines the need for the United Nations system to ensure the integration of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action into the coordinated approach taken to the follow-up to all recent major United Nations conferences and summit meetings and to the implementation of their respective plans of action;

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[2] See resolution 44/236, annex.

[3] A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[4] Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

9. Invites the Secretary-General, in particular to facilitate, within the existing International Framework of Action for the Decade, an internationally concerted framework for improvements in early warning by developing a concrete proposal for an effective international mechanism on early warning, to include the transfer of technologies related to early warning to developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations and as part of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade and the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action;

10. Calls upon the secretariat of the Decade to continue to facilitate a concerted international approach to improvements in early warning capacities for natural disasters and similar disasters with adverse impact on the environment within the process leading towards the closing event of the Decade;

11. Recommends that adequate consideration be given to the International Framework of Action for the Decade as part of the evaluation and overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21[5] in 1997;

12. Reaffirms that the secretariat of the Decade will continue to serve as the substantive secretariat for the preparation of the closing event of the Decade, working with the full support of relevant bodies of the United Nations Secretariat and drawing on the contributions of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned, other international organizations and Governments;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to appeal for additional voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade;

14. Also requests the Secretary-General to bring forward, as a first step in the process leading towards the closing event of the Decade, and in order to begin the preparatory process in 1998, proposals arising from consultation with interested parties, and to set forth in his substantive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, proposals regarding the format, substance and timing of the event, also taking into account, inter alia, the need to review relationships and responsibilities relevant to natural disaster reduction with respect to the future and the performance capability of the secretariat of the Decade.

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[5] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (vol. I and vol. I/Corr.1, vol. II, vol. III and vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference resolution 1, annex II.